

THE JEWISH GAILY

FORWARD

NOVEMBER 1981

שנער זהב

HESHVAN/KISLEV 5742

A HOME OF OUR OWN!!

The Holiday Period--Chapter Five

Our building campaign to have a "Home of Our Own" progresses. You have pledged more than \$160,000 to see this dream become a reality. Almost all of this money has come from within our Congregation. Members will be contacting other members who have not yet made their pledges, and our goal (with everyone's help) is to have 100% pledged support from the membership of the Congregation.

We have retained legal counsel to present us in negotiations with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Many members of the Congregation are busy with outreach to the larger Jewish, lesbian, gay and historic preservation communities. We will be looking to "spread the word" among these groups for financial pledges and other forms of support. We have had some incredibly impressive beginnings in these areas and will keep you informed

of developments. I have found myself in the awkward position (and yet the fantasy of any PR maven) of having to cool the heels of eager reporters anxious to break our unique and historic story. Our coordinated outreach effort will be launched when negotiations on the Bush Street synagogue reach certain levels.

During the High Holy Days, an appeal was made to members and those who joined us to participate in helping us acquire A Home of Our Own. Additional opportunities for participation in our fundraising are being planned for individuals who joined us in our High Holy Days celebrations.

Happy New Year, and to paraphrase an old Jewish prayer: "Next year on Bush Street!!"

-Mark Feldman

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THANKSGIVING

Though many of us have probably never thought of them this way, Sukkot and Thanksgiving are little more than variations on the same theme of harvest celebration. Yes, even before Pilgrim governor William Bradford set aside a few days in 1621 for the new feast of Thanksgiving, other cultures in different times and places had been glorying in its celebration, yet calling it different names.

For instance, we read about the Canaanite Thanksgiving in the book of Judges: "And they went out into the field, and gathered

the vineyards, and trode the grapes and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and ate and drank." And to us Hebrews, Moses relayed the basic instructions for the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Deuteronomy: "You shall keep the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing and from your winepress, and you shall rejoice in your feast...Seven days you shall keep a feast unto God, because God blesses you..."

(Continued on page 4.)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Our observance of the High Holy Days provided an opportunity for service to the community by our congregation. We continued a tradition of opening our doors to all who wished to pray with us and hundreds attended. Our guests were young and old, gay and non-gay, Jewish and non-Jewish. We can be proud of fulfilling a mitzvah, following a tradition which has been handed down from Abraham and Sarah: hospitality and shalom to strangers.

The strength of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, though, is not in its ability to attract 700 people to Kol Nidre services, but in our ability to develop a fabric of meaningful relationships and services for our members. Women and men share in the tasks of creating an atmosphere where sexual preference and sexuality are not issues, but where freedom allows us to express our Jewishness with vitality and strength of spirit.

The rewards of membership do not have to end at the tax deduction stage. While we owe appreciation and thanks to the many people who helped make the celebration of the holidays beautiful and enjoyable, each has already received an important intangible sense of pride in giving of themselves.

Sukkot was celebrated in a sukkah in the Oakland hills by 45 Zahavniks in a ceremony warmed by a log fire and lit by candlelight and the rays of the moon filtering through the fruit and vegetable bedecked trellis. We remembered our people wandering through the desert in their march to the promised land and we rededicated ourselves to the same pursuit of a Jewish life of peace, understanding

and commitment. In an atmosphere of good food and drink, old friendships deepened and new acquaintanceships became friendships.

In becoming an active and committed member, each of us partakes of and adds to the special sense of mishpachah that we have. New and interesting programs, including a liturgical music group, a folkdance group, a cultural chavurah, and a variety of personal support groups are being established by members eager to share their interests and time. Working to make Sha'ar Zahav meaningful to yourself is possible and will happen, your own participation.

Excerpts from the letter I read during my Kol Nidre remarks:

I would like to offer...My motive is not entirely altruistic...I am hoping that my son may find a way to renew his interest in Judaism...Perhaps if his Dad were helping the gay and lesbian congregation...His mother and I will always love him very much.

-Paul J. Cohen

BEFORE 1981 ENDS...

Now is the time for all good persons to consider a donation to Sha'ar Zahav. With the latest revisions in the tax laws, it may be advantageous for those who itemize deductions to increase charitable contributions for the tax year ending December 31, 1981.

So, for Building Fund pledges, membership dues, donations to the general fund, contributions to the Oneg account, Bikur Cholim, etc., etc., etc., don't delay---write your checks today!

Remember, this is our synagogue, our community, and our financial support is vital to our growing strength. Let me know if you want your gift to remain anonymous; otherwise, it will be recognized in the Forward.

Thank you in advance.

-Irene Ogas
Treasurer

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Members of the Newsletter Committee are Chad Cohen, Ira Kulkin, Cathy Nelson (chair), Chuck Norton and Richard Usem.

FROM WHERE I STAND

November seems to be the month when people are gearing up for "the holidays." For the Jewish community, having just finished "the holidays," this is a whole other perspective which we don't have during our High Holy Days. It is an annual reminder that we live in a world surrounded by folks who are not Jewish, and who, for the most part, don't know a great deal about Jewish practices and customs.

The reverse is also true, even though the non-Jewish society in which we live far outnumbers our own community. For that reason, I have found it instructive to learn as much about the religious traditions and beliefs of my neighbors as I can, and to teach them as much about mine as they are willing to learn. I have encouraged interfaith dialogue and worship among a number of groups in the hope that through shared religious experience, we could come to understand each other better, perhaps putting to rest some myths about religious and cultural questions.

While ecumenism has been quite popular among Christians for some time, it is only now being considered acceptable among Jews, since, for the longest time, anything which was labelled "interfaith" raised old fears of attempts at conversion by Christians. While I cannot guarantee that such attempts will not be made by some whose beliefs mandate proselytizing, I do assume that people with whom we share interfaith experience will not engage in such activities, purely out of mutual respect.

That is why I have supported our having an annual interfaith Shabbat service the week of Thanksgiving each year, since it gives us the opportunity to meet our non-Jewish friends in the religious community on our own turf, and enables them to join with us in a beautiful worship and social experience.

- Rabbi Allen B. Bennett

VA'AD REPORT

Amid the lovely environs of Mike Rankin's Menlo Park home, the Va'ad held its October meeting on Sunday, the 11th.

Michael F. reported that in his discussions with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations pending our admission, there have been several recommendations about particulars of our By-Laws that are ambiguous or misleading. The UAHC pointed out how our statement of purpose could be construed, because of ambiguous language, to mean that membership is open only to lesbians and gay men. Michael proposed several changes, which were accepted by the Va'ad and will be presented for approval to the Congregation at the semi-annual Congregational meeting on Sunday, November 1.

At the Newsletter Committee's request, the Va'ad approved a resolution calling for the adoption of an advertising policy for the Jewish Gaily Forward. (See article on page 4.)

Over 30 names were presented to the Va'ad for acceptance into membership. Paul Cohen suggested initiating new members' gatherings, which would give the Va'ad an opportunity to personally greet all newcomers and introduce them to our activities, programs, committees, etc. Few ideas have ever been as enthusiastically received by a unanimous Va'ad as this one.

Plans for the annual Chanukah celebration, latke party, and raffle (see center page) on Friday, December 25, were discussed.

Finally, it was announced that Ken Mauss will chair the Social Action Committee (first meeting on Thursday, Novemebr 12) and that Ron Lezell will chair the Social Program Committee (first meeting on Tuesday, November 17), as well as that the Ritual Committee is recruiting participants for a sub-committee to work with Daniel Chesir on the development of a new High Holy Days prayerbook for next year. For further information on any of these, call the synagogue office at 621-2871.

-Aaron Cooper, Recorder

REFLECTIONS (Continued from page 1.)

Wait, there are more examples. The harvest festival of ancient Greece, called Thesomophoria, was celebrated each November by married women only. This festival was a mixture of great mirth and solemnity during which a cow and a sow were offered to Demeter, goddess of the harvest. The ancient Romans' October festival was called Cerelia, in reference to their harvest goddess, Ceres. It began solemnly, with fasting and sacrifice, and concluded convivially with music, games and feasting. And in England, the autumnal festival called Harvest Home dates back to Saxon times. It was a particularly secular method of celebrating the close of the harvest with feasting in huge tents.

Not to mention the Ugandan Napores' celebration called "Blessing of the Spears," or the West African Fantis who beat drums in thanksgiving to the spirits of a different kind of harvest, the Sea Harvest, or the Virgin Islanders' Hurricane Thanksgiving, or the Aztec's Xilonen festival in which each year a young woman was beheaded as a representation of the goddess of corn.

In fact, hardly a culture has existed that hasn't had some annual observance of a thanksgiving. I believe we can safely leap inductively ahead to say that these harvest festivals are, when regarded in the grand design of things, part of a worldwide cultural expression which celebrates the fecundity of the earth and beseeches God for continued beneficence.

If we scrutinize the history of Thanksgiving and Sukkot, the two harvest holidays we experience in our Jewish-American orientation, we see some interesting similarities. The Pilgrims were

very devoted to the "Old Testament," and also saw the ancient Hebrews as an archetype of themselves in several respects: One, both the Hebrews and the Pilgrims fled a land of oppression to journey to another where freedom awaited them, the Pilgrims fleeing from religious persecution in England, and the ancient Hebrews fleeing from slavery in Egypt. Two, both groups wandered trails of physical and spiritual hardships before reaching their promised lands, the Pilgrims by way of Holland and the Atlantic Ocean and the ancient Hebrews by way of the desert.

Third, and perhaps more important for this discussion than an exodus from oppression and a trek filled with trials, is the harvest of plenty each group had after entering their respective promised lands, which afforded them lives of independence. Lives of independence, yes, but not from the God whom they believed had sustained them and made it all possible. This is why some very explicit building instructions for a succah require it to have a roof though which the heavens are never hidden. And this is also why a Thanksgiving feast is inseparably linked with prayer. Thus, the celebration of both Sukkot and Thanksgiving have a "shared" history.

There is something profoundly simple about these facts, for they put our roots and reasons into their proper nooks in a worldwide, timeless perspective. And we see where our Jewish heritage fits, along with the Virgin Islanders' heritage, and the Fantis' heritage, and the Napores' heritage, and all other peoples' histories, and we find the source of a favorite American holiday---Thanksgiving.

-Howard (Chad) Cohen

ADS NOW ACCEPTED

By now, you've surely noticed something you've never seen in the Jewish Gaily Forward before: paid advertising.

At the October Va'ad meeting, a proposal by the Newsletter Committee was discussed and approved. Under its provisions, we will now be able to further two complementary goals: To defray the high costs of producing and distributing our newsletter, while at the same time, letting our readers

know about businesses and professional services in our community.

Our rate is \$5 per column inch (the column is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide), and we offer a 10% discount for six or more pre-paid insertions. Camera-ready copy must be received by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

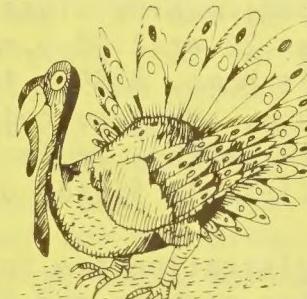
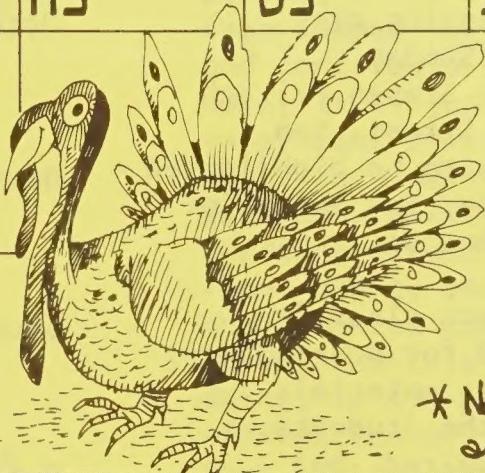
Howard (Chad) Cohen has been named advertising manager, and can be reached at 346-1599, or by leaving a message for him at the synagogue office, 621-2871.

NOVEMBER

חנוך כסלו

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Kibbutz Degania founded 1910 ד	Balfour Day ה	Election Day ו		4	5	6
1	2	3	7	ט	Rabbi Allen B. Bennett, ט Services י	7
V'od Meeting 621-2871 יא	9	10	11	Social Action Committee* 771-7791 טו	Rabbi Allen B. Bennett, ט Services יז	14
Warsaw Ghetto established (1940) יח	15	Newsletter Committee* 621-0628 יט	16	Social Program Committee* 621-3930 כ	17	David Ben-Jacob and Rabbi Allen B. Bennett, כ ג Services כד
22	23	Oveg Committee* 776-1289 כח	24	25	19 Emma Lazarus died (1887) Bitur Chidush 821-2217 כט	20 Interfaith Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway Shabbat Service Rosh Hodesh Kislev נ Please see below ב
29	30					

The 64th anniversary of a letter sent by British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour to Chaim Weizmann stating that the British government favored "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."



* Note: Committee meetings are at 7:30 p.m.

RITUAL CALENDAR

Friday, November 6 Torah Lekh Lekha Genesis 12:1 - 17:27 Haftorah Isaiah 40:27 - 41:16 Rabbi Allen B. Bennett

Friday, November 13 Torah Va Yera Genesis 18:1 - 22:24 Haftorah II Kings 4:1 - 37 Rabbi Allen B. Bennett

Friday, November 20 Torah Hayy i Sarah Genesis 23:1 - 25:18 Haftorah I Kings 1:1 - 31 David Ben-Jacob and Rabbi Allen B. Bennett

Friday, November 27 Torah Toldot Genesis 25:19 - 28:9 Haftorah Malachi 1:1 - 2:7 Rosh Chodesh Kislev Richard Look, Rob T., Mike Rankin and Steven Fritsch Rudser Annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Shabbat Service

OUR NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM

The following classes, organized by the Education Committee of Sha'ar Zahav, will begin the first week of November:

Introduction to Judaism; 7:30 p.m. Sundays, beginning November 1; Rabbi Allen B. Bennett, instructor; 1650 Page Street, San Francisco.

Beginning Biblical Hebrew; 8:30 p.m. Sundays, beginning November 1; Rabbi Allen B. Bennett, instructor; 1650 Page Street, San Francisco.

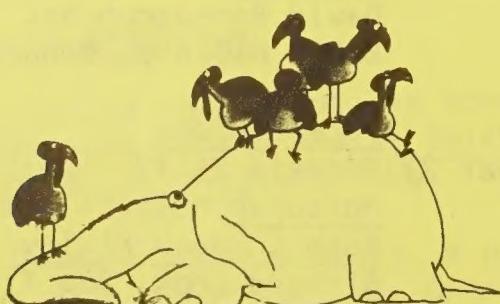
Beginning Modern Hebrew; 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, beginning November 5; Roger Kaplan, instructor; 75 Alviso Street, San Francisco.

History of Judaism; 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, beginning November 5; Kenneth Burke, instructor; 75 Alviso Street, San Francisco.

Jewish Literature (Jewish authors or themes); 7:30 p.m. Mondays, beginning November 2; Jay Johnson, instructor; 312 Holladay Street, San Francisco.

There will also be a one session pre-Chanukkah cooking class on Sunday, November 22 at 2:00 p.m. at Steven Fritsch Rudser's home, 4355 - 18th Street, San Francisco. Holiday cuisine to be highlighted includes latkes, apple sauce, and sufganiot (Israeli-style filled doughnuts).

The registration fee for each class is \$5.00 for members and \$7.50 for non-members. Any textbooks or other class materials are the responsibility of the students. Pre-registration is not required, but students who plan to take a class and find themselves unable to attend the first session should contact Rabbi Bennett at the synagogue office, 621-2871.



DON'T LET THE TURKEYS GET YOU DOWN.

ONEG, Ltd.

Well, the High Holy Days are once again behind us and I want to thank everyone who helped the Oneg Committee with this loving chore. I was so glad to see so many people. It is a great feeling.

I want to thank Walt Leiss for again sponsoring the High Holy Days onegs and flowers, and giving his time and energy so freely.

Volunteers are needed to help with our annual Chanukkah celebration and latke party, which this year will include a raffle for some beautiful prizes. Call me at 771-1289 evenings or see me after services if you're interested.

Shalom,
David Ben-Jacob

October Onegs

- | | |
|------------|---|
| October 2 | By the Congregation, in honor of Walt Leiss and his service to the us. |
| October 9 | By Cindy Schoor and Joyce Amburgey, in honor of their fourth anniversary. |
| October 16 | By David Ben-Jacob, to thank everyone who has sponsored onegs. |
| October 23 | By A. G. Beauregard Lowell IV in honor of Prime Minister Menachem Begin. |
| October 30 | By Glenn Friedman, for the enjoyment of the congregation. |

Relaxing or invigorating massage for women, focusing on individual needs. Certified Masseuse. Gift certificates. Sue 655-2550

LETTERS...WE GET LETTERS...

Dear People of Sha'ar Zahav:

I would like to thank the members of the Congregation for their outpouring of support for the Freedom Run for Soviet Jewry, which took place on Sunday, October 18. Many members took on parts of the planning and preparation process of what turned out to be an enormous task. Other, perhaps harder, members of the Congregation were among the 230 runners who passed the Soviet consulate general in a startling and innovative statement for human rights. Still more came to the Rally in front of the consulate, and Sha'ar Zahav's presence was announced to all by your impressive banner.

The Run and the Rally made information about Soviet Jewry available to thousands of Jews and non-Jews who would otherwise remain uninformed and I believe that our actions constitute one straw of the many which, we hope, will one day break the "camel's back" of Soviet oppression of our sisters and brothers.

I wish you a happy and prosperous 5742 and I look forward to visiting you in our new home. Thank you again.

-Greg Smith
Run Coordinator

SOCIAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

A very important planning and goal-setting meeting of the Social Program Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of the committee's chair, Ron Lezell, at 662 Hayes Street (between Laguna and Buchanan), San Francisco. One of the congregation's goals is the further development and implementation of recreational and social activities.

Judging from the successful, sold-out Screaming Memes performance held last month, members and friends are anxious for regular social programs in addition to our religious services and other activities.

Please contact Ron at 621-3930 if you would like to participate in this committee.

Dear Editor:

Recently, we have seen the passing of four people who have greatly influenced our times and particularly our Jewish, lesbian and gay communities:

-Anwar Sadat, in a cruel and unexpected moment;

-Harry Golden, who wrote books that said, "Jewish is good (and not only good, but fun and funny)."

-Don Bradley, a HUMAN political campaign director who was one of the people most responsible for our stunning "NO ON 6" victory a few years ago;

-Moshe Dayan, whose death occurred within the past hour of my writing.

I am not one given to writing obituaries, yet the sense of slow, iceberg-like shifts of eras and time struck me. Out of my sense of sadness that the world has been deprived of the good deeds of these four people, I had a sense that the way has been opened for a new generation of leaders and contributors. And if I can be so bold, it is just possible that our unique experiment in religious and social history might very well produce some of the women and men who will be leaders in the future. Creating a home of our own, a base, a focal point, and roof for our diverse and talented community, seems somehow to advance this vision. What we are doing, in my opinion, represents a reaffirmation of the best of what these four contributors have stood for, lived for, and will be remembered for.

-Mark Feldman

UNDER HYPNOSIS...

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Attaining financial well-being . . .

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CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

This November marks the third anniversary of the deaths of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

We have been asked to announce that the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club is sponsoring a Candlelight Memorial to George Moscone and Harvey Milk on Friday, November 27 at 8:00 p.m., beginning at Castro and 18th Streets, with a silent candlelight walk to City Hall. In addition to paying tribute to two individuals, the Memorial re-affirms the determination to struggle against the violence that has claimed the lives of so many.

If you are interested in forming a Sha'ar Zahav contingent, please leave a message with the synagogue office, 621-2871.



AT LAST! GIFT PROBLEMS SOLVED!

Wonder no more. You can honor or memorialize any person on any occasion with a gift to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. A card will be sent to the person you name, and all this can be arranged with a telephone call to Ernie Weinstein at 566-1985. Even Neiman-Marcus runs out of stock, but your congregation has no such problems when it comes to this opportunity!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you're moving,
please allow six
weeks for
processing time.

Attach current address label here.

NEW ADDRESS:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail to:
Sha'ar Zahav
P.O. Box 5640
S.F. CA 94101

BIRTHDAYS

Joe Zygielbaum	November 2
Marcy Holzman	November 3
Haim Gamburg	November 11
Robert Smith	November 13
Mark Resnick	November 16
Ken Mauss	November 21
David Ben-Jacob	November 22
Allen Blumenfeld	November 26
Jerry Harris	November 26
Jeff Gudstadt	November 29

YAHRZEITS

Julia Sharp, niece of Catherine Nelson 4 Heshvan/November 1

Anna Gold, grandmother of Allan Gold November 7

Harry Berenstein, father of Allan Berenstein 18 Heshvan/November 15

Maurice William Osser, father of Gordon Osser November 16

Nathan Thall, brother of Sam Thal November

Esther Kalis, mother of Betty Kalis November 24

Fred M. Weiss, grandfather of Wendy November 25

Harry Marcus, father of Ben Marcus 28 Heshvan/November 25

DONATIONS

Howard Cohen
N. & M. Charney

